

Inside The Funks Ask The Fans:  
"HELP US BAN DUSTY RHODES!"

VICTORY  
SPORTS  
SERIES

# Wrestling

February 1980  
47727 \$1.25

**KEN PATERA: "I BEAT  
BACKLUND AND BRUNO  
BOTH ON ONE NIGHT!"**



Ivan Putski &  
Tito Santana  
WILL JEALOUSY  
RIP THEM APART!



*Jimmy Snuka  
Admits...*  
**RIC FLAIR  
MADE ME  
U.S. CHAMPION!**

# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter  
King

Editor-in-Chief

With the new year--and new decade--just days away, I thought it might be fun to list a few of my predictions for wrestling in 1980. Next year at this time, we'll all know how I well I did.

1. Bob Backlund will lose his WWF championship, probably before Autumn.
2. Harley Race will yet again lose the NWA belt, but this time he won't regain it.
3. WWF tag team champions Ivan Putski and Tito Santana will be one of the shortest-lived champions in wrestling history.
4. Nick Bockwinkel will continue to defend his AWA belt. By the end of the year, with Backlund and Race having fallen, many will consider Bockwinkel the best champion in wrestling.
5. Ric Flair will resume his rulebreaking ways before the end of winter.
6. One of the following men will be banned for at least a few weeks in 1980: Ken Patera, Terry Funk, or Jimmy Snuka.
7. Bruno Sammartino will return to a full wrestling schedule by August, but he will not be able to win the WWF belt.
8. It will be the best year ever for Larry Zbyszko.
9. Rick Steamboat will come just seconds short of winning a world championship. But he will not be champion until 1983.
10. The Masked Superstar will be unmasked and all of wrestling will be shocked at his true identity.
11. Although he will have his finest year statistically, Greg Gagne will be discouraged because he doesn't win the AWA title.
12. One of Pat Patterson's many enemies will sneak-attack the hated rulebreaker and drive him from the sport with a crippling injury.

# THE INSIDER

By STEVEN FARHOOD



## SCOOP OF THE MONTH

Buddy Rogers, manager of U.S. champion Jimmy Snuka, insists the rule-breaker from the Fiji Islands wears wrestling boots while grappling! Snuka, a sensational aerial artist who recently converted to rule-breaking, has always wrestled barefoot in a

distinguished career.

"None of those primitive jungle habits for my wrestlers," Rogers insists. "I told Jimmy he had to wrestle with shoes on, or he could go get another manager. Realizing the importance of his association with me, he quickly agreed.

"And I think you can see what a difference wearing

Since coming under Buddy Rogers' management, Jimmy Snuka has been told he must wear wrestling boots in the ring. Snuka wrestled barefoot as a fan favorite.

wrestling boots has made in Jimmy's ring performances. The man is literally unbeatable now. Before, he was just some barefoot clown flying around the ring in any direction."

(Continued on page 46)

## ON THE ROAD

with

GARY MORGENSTEIN

MADISON  
SQUARE GARDEN  
NEW YORK CITY

MAPLE LEAF GARDEN  
TORONTO

MINNEAPOLIS  
AUDITORIUM  
MINNEAPOLIS  
THE SCOPE  
NORFOLK

THE SUPERDOME  
NEW ORLEANS

MID-SOUTH  
COLISEUM  
MEMPHIS

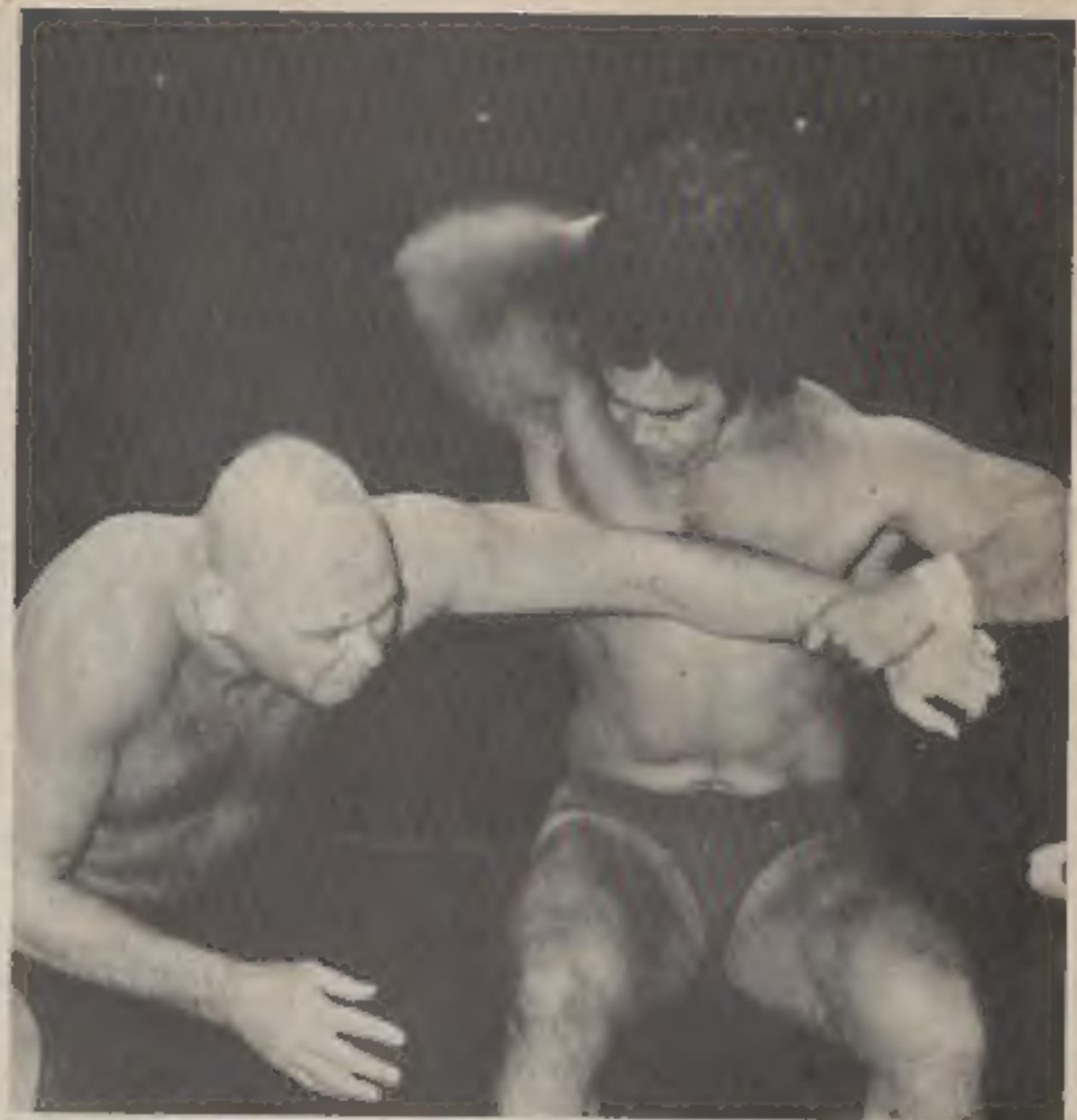
THE SPECTRUM  
PHILADELPHIA

THE OLYMPIA  
LOS ANGELES  
THE KIEL  
ST. LOUIS  
COBO HALL  
DETROIT

THE SUMMIT  
HOUSTON

THE OMNI  
ATLANTA

MIAMI BEACH  
AUDITORIUM  
MIAMI



Rick Steamboat sets up Baron Von Raschke for an elbowsmash. Steamboat has been very withdrawn for the past few months and everyone that has come in contact with him has noticed the change. Associate Editor Gary Morgenstein believes that Steamboat is being blackmailed.

### RICK STEAMBOAT BLACKMAILED?

That report wrenched me from my holiday sabbatical and lured me down the highway toward Greensboro, North Carolina. My source, a middle-aged woman with impeccable reliability, had called and told me something was up with Steamboat. He'd grown reticent, at times surly. His friendliness toward fans had cooled off. I'd heard rumors to that effect from my colleague, Matt Brock. During lunch, he suggested I investigate. The phone call clinched the deal.

During the past few months, Rick Steamboat has changed. I've detected that change and been disturbed by it. I wondered if this change foreshadowed a deeper alteration in style and temperament. His brief pairing with Ric Flair further worried observers. But what really troubled

Steamboat admirers was his refusal to explain his decisions.

"I don't have to explain myself to no one," Rick said shortly after he teamed with Flair.

Admittedly, I admire Steamboat as a wrestler and man. Admittedly, my admiration on both counts had decreased. Until I realized he might not be in control of his own destiny. Blackmail requires a why and a who. That was my job.

I approached Steamboat in a diner. He had refused to answer my calls and, frankly, I have no patience for petulant adolescents. Steamboat was digesting a smoking pile of food. I pulled out a chair and forced a smile. Steamboat glanced up, grimaced, and shoveled potatoes into his throat.

"I won't pull punches, Rick," I began. His grimace deepened. "I  
(Continued on page 50)

# Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket

I HAVE NOT come to bury Bobby Heenan but to praise him. Too many people, mostly those who've suffered at Bobby's hands, are saying Heenan is through as a manager. When Bobby's wrestler, Killer Kox, lost the Georgia title to Tommy Rich, the word went out that Heenan's magic was gone. People blamed Heenan for the loss, despite the fact that Kox had some of the best strategies in wrestling history.

There are always vultures circling around a defeat, and this defeat just brought out more of them. These are the people who think Heenan is bad for wrestling and hope to see him driven from the sport. These are the same people who think Tommy Rich's championship is good for wrestling.

These simpletons will be sorry to know that Bobby will soon come back better than ever! I'm not at liberty to say exactly what is being planned by his brilliant mind, but those who've called him finished are in for a rude shock. One could hope the shock would set them to thinking, but these

people haven't been in touch with their brains since birth.

I contacted Heenan after Kox's loss, as any friend would. However, I knew Bobby well enough to know

doesn't matter, the belt has fallen into disgrace. Can you imagine anyone wanting a title after Rich has won it? Even if the bum did cheat, it's embarrassing to have your name in the record book



Dan Shocket feels that Killer Kox (biting above) has been provided with brilliant wrestling strategies by his manager, Bobby Heenan, but since Kox lost the Georgia title to Tommy Rich, Heenan has been unjustly criticized. Shocket believes that if Kox follows Heenan's orders, he will soon regain the title.

he'd be down but never out. I was not disappointed.

"Can you believe Tommy Rich is a champion?" Heenan asked, then laughed. "Just goes to show, the people get what they deserve. He'll lose it soon, but I don't really care. After Rich has had the title, it

alongside his. I'm going to ask the NWA if I could have my name removed as Kox's manager on the official record. Tommy Rich. Just goes to prove that a bribed referee can make anyone champion.

"Defeat is part of

*(Continued on page 52)*

# 'TOP SECRET'

## Behind the Dressing Room Door by Stu Saks

PEDRO MORALES PULLED his lounge chair up one notch and reached for his pina colada. He might have had one too many because he was beginning to open up a bit.

"Eventually, the feeling will come back to me," he said as he paused to take a large gulp of his drink. "But right now, I'm content. Very content."

It is not difficult to see how Pedro Morales could feel the way he does. Sitting under a palm tree, the sun blared around us. Not a cloud in sight. Eighty-seven degrees. It was summer in Puerto Rico. It was truly December in New York. When I boarded my plane at Kennedy Airport, I thought a lot about Pedro Morales, the man I was assigned to interview. The cold wind in my face made my eyes tear and I thought back to a similar night nine years ago.

February 8, 1971. That night Pedro Morales' life took a complete turn. That night he achieved his life long ambition when his neckbridge pressed Ivan Koloff's shoulders to the mat, after 10 minutes, 41 seconds, he became the fourth WWF champion. Twenty-two thousand fans of all nationalities stood and cheered wildly at Madison Square Garden as the new champ circled the ring, waving the flags of the United States and Puerto Rico. Bruno Sammartino, the man who many of the same fans saw lose the title three weeks earlier after a seven-year reign, wrapped the diamond-studded belt around Pedro's waist.

For two years, nine months, and 23 days, Pedro Morales' life was as it never was before. He  
(Continued on page 52)

# NAMES MAKI

Georgia heavyweight champion TOMMY RICH swears that the gossip circulating about BOBBY HEENAN having him under contract is nothing but a lie. Heenan on the other hand, says he has a contract in his possession that he and Rich jointly signed three years ago.

"It's a 10 year contract," Heenan points out. "If Rich doesn't honor it I'll take him to court, sue the pants off him, and have the Georgia title stripped from that puny little waist of his. I own the Georgia title in reality—not Tommy Rich!"



**TOMMY RICH**

ERNIE LADD seems to thrive on multi-year feuds. Said Ladd in an interview several years ago. "When I hate an opponent, daddy, I hate 'em forever. I'll never stop tryin' to end the dude's career." That is why we find it very strange that Ernie's feud with hated rival SWEET BROWN SUGAR only lasted one match. After the bout in Florida, Ladd skipped town and no one knows why. Ladd, when



**TERRY FUNK**

queried about the situation, made a hasty retreat away from our reporters and yelled "stop buggin' me!" A nice guy, Ernie Ladd.

After MANNY FERNANDEZ took the Florida championship from TERRY FUNK, Terry became so enraged that one week later he pulled a sneak attack on Manny and almost broke Fernandez's leg! . . . In another sneak attack, this one in the Mid-Atlantic region, United States champion JIMMY SNUKA and his dispicable manager BUDDY ROGERS went after TIM "MR. WRESTLING" WOODS and nearly broke Tim's neck!

It's not a rumor: RODDY PIPER is being cheered by fans on the West Coast . . . Japanese wrestling magazine editor Wally Yamaguchi reports that the bouts

between DUSTY RHODES and ANTONIO INOKI in Japan were some of the finest matches seen in that country in recent years. "The fans were very glad to see Dusty Rhodes after an absence of many years in our country," Yamaguchi said.

**CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO**



**RODDY PIPER**



**INOKI**

# N' NEWS

Bill Apter  
reporting...



## MIL MASCARAS

claims that THE VALIANT BROTHERS are begging to return to him. "They want the Captain to manage them again so they can be successful again," boasts Albano. "Well, daddy, the Captain don't want no part of them. I have got THE SAMOANS, the greatest tag team in history. They are rough, they are tough, they are outta sight! They listen to the Captain so they'll go all the way to the top. All the way!"

Our spies tell us that GREG VALENTINE has already had several dinner meetings with RIC FLAIR (Valentine is trying to persuade Flair to return to the rulebreaking fraternity as reported in an earlier issue). So far Valentine has had no luck, and who knows, you may see a Flair vs. Valentine match before long. Their friendship might not be as iron clad as Valentine thinks it is.

MIL MASCARAS has an upcoming date against VICTOR RIVERA. Mil regrets having to take this match because at one time he and Victor were the best of friends. Rivera anxiously awaits the bout. "How I ever befriended

that masked fool is beyond me," he says. "I must have been sick in the head!" . . . KEVIN VON ERICH is the new Missouri State titleholder after defeating DICK MURDOCH. Kevin and his entire family hope this is a sign of even bigger things to come.

WWF tag team champions IVAN PUTSKI and TITO SANTANA successfully defended their title against former champions JERRY and JOHN VALIANT . . . SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM is looking as impressive as ever in his Tennessee matches. His recent matches against JERRY LAWLER saw him in one of his toughest tests to date . . . RICK STEAMBOAT and JAY YOUNG-BLOOD gave PAUL JONES and BARON VON RASCHKE a



JERRY LAWLER

bloody thrashing as the hated duo of Jones and the Baron tried unsuccessfully to regain the NWA tag team belt.

PAT PATTERSON has added



PAT PATTERSON

another belt to his collection. Pat took the Americas championship from BULL RAMOS in a highly controversial bout in Hawaii . . . Young EDDIE GILBERT racking up an impressive victory streak in Missouri . . . THE ASSASSIN and THE AVENGER continue to dominate Kansas City tag team action.

That's all for now. See you next time. □

# Ivan Putski & Tito S

**R**EPORTERS RUSHED TO interview the new WWF tag team champions. Basking in their victory, Ivan Putski and Tito Santana answered all questions. However, most of the questions were directed to Ivan.

When Putski realized what was happening, he tried to guide more questions to his partner. Still, reporters kept coming back to Ivan, wanting the opinions of the more famous grappler of the pair. A look of concern crossed Ivan's face.

"No more questions, please," Ivan finally announced. "The new champions want to go out and celebrate."

As reporters left, Tito wished them all well. The young man was too happy to realize his partner was troubled. However, reporters could see Putski was worried.

It didn't take a genius to figure out what was troubling Ivan. The veteran grappler knows that it's very difficult to keep a tag team at its best. The strong personality of each wrestler must be molded for the common good. Wrestlers aren't accustomed to working as a team. There is always tension. Often, the tension tears at the team until there's nothing left.

Tito didn't notice that most of the questions were directed toward Ivan. The older wrestler noticed. Also, Ivan knows what



## WILL JEALOUSY R

# Santana

happens when one member of a team gets more attention. In a few months, jealousy ruins the team. On the first night of his championship, Ivan realized his title was on shaky grounds.

Other wrestlers realized it, also. Dominic DeNucci, a good friend of the pair, saw the press conference and saw what happened. "I considered saying something to Tito," DeNucci explained, "but there's nothing to say. He's in a bad situation. No wrestler can stand being in a tag team partner's shadow. No

**The moment Ivan Putski and Tito Santana won the WWF tag team title the media focused its attention on the more experienced, more renown Putski. Santana went virtually unnoticed. How long will it be before Santana begins to resent his partner?**

matter how you try to stop the jealousy, it eats at you like a disease. That's what the teams that survive are the teams of equals. Sooner or later, Tito is going to be hurt. Then he'll get angry. Finally, he'll destroy the team.

"Look, they're my friends. I hope they get lucky. I hope Tito can work it out. I know Ivan will try his damnedest to make this work. I really hope I'm wrong and these guys remain champions forever."

Another friend, Chief Jay Strongbow, believes the most important factor is beyond their

*(Continued on page 48)*



Tito Santana keeps a watchful eye on the Valiants' corner as he holds Johnny in an armbar. Many of the Valiants' opponents have lost their chance to win the WWF belts by not being alert to interference from the champions' corner.

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & STU SAKS



Ivan Putski puts all of his enormous strength into a bearhug on Jerry Valiant. The referee has his attention on the action in the ring and also the attempt by Johnny to free his brother. Putski and Santana overcame the Valiants' double-teaming efforts to win the tag team title.

# ZIP THEM APART?

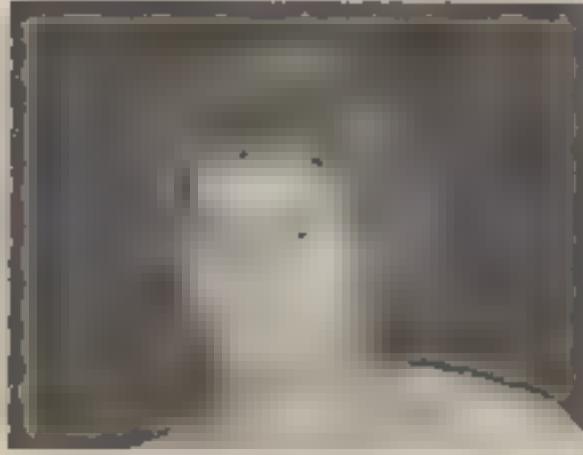
# NEWS FROM THE

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports while also being officially credited with your own by line send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

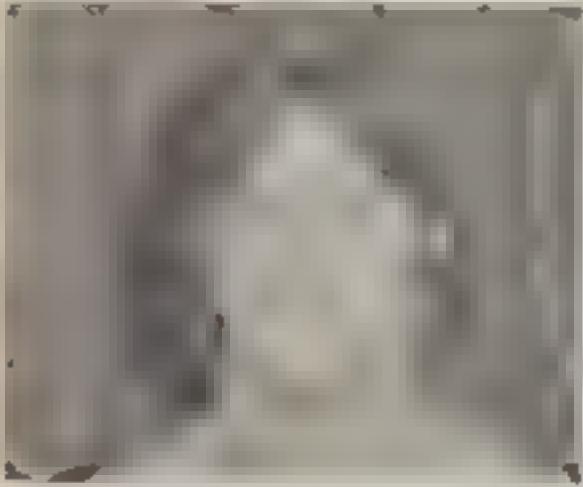
Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

## KNOXVILLE, TENN.

By Tim Hart



DICK SLATER  
vs.  
PAUL ORNDORFF



## MIDDLESEX, N.J.

By Ed Lair



GREG VALENTINE  
vs.  
IVAN PUTSKI

## TORONTO, CAN.

By Keith Gibbs



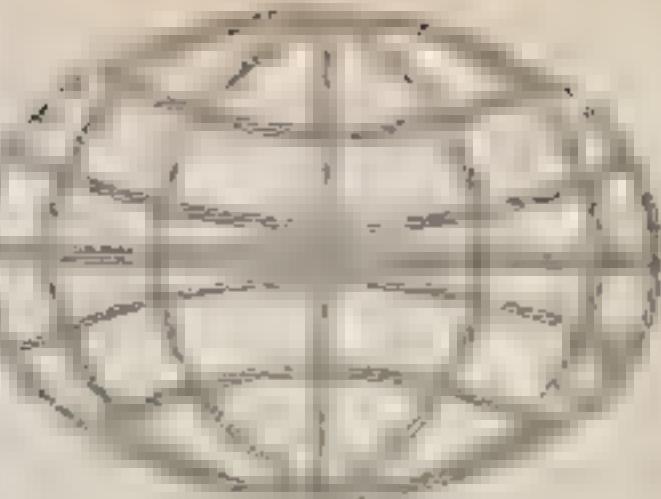
NICK BOCKWINKEL  
vs.  
DEWEY ROBERTSON

Fans were treated to a rare match two men wrestling cleanly and fairly, using only the most advanced scientific maneuvers known. These two upstanding grapplers were Dick Slater and Paul Orndorff. Their bout was a textbook example of scientific wrestling. Slater's maneuvers proved slightly better than Orndorff's, garnering him the win. **OTHER BOUTS:** Robert Fuller beat Jimmy Golden . . . Andre the Giant and the Mongolian Stomper discharged Ox Baker and Alexis Smirnoff . . . Ron Fuller and the French Angel were both counted out.

The master of the figure-four leglock, Greg Valentine, took on the Polish Power of Ivan Putski. This match was truly amazing. Valentine was vicious and mean, while Putski was just great. Valentine tried everything he knew, including the figure-four leglock, but Putski managed to win. **OTHER BOUTS:** Ted DiBiase drew with Hussein Arab . . . Larry Zbyszko whipped Jose Estrada . . . Johnny Rodz drew with Johnny Rivera . . . Tito Santana downed Gypsy Rodriguez . . . Pete Sanchez drew with Steve King.

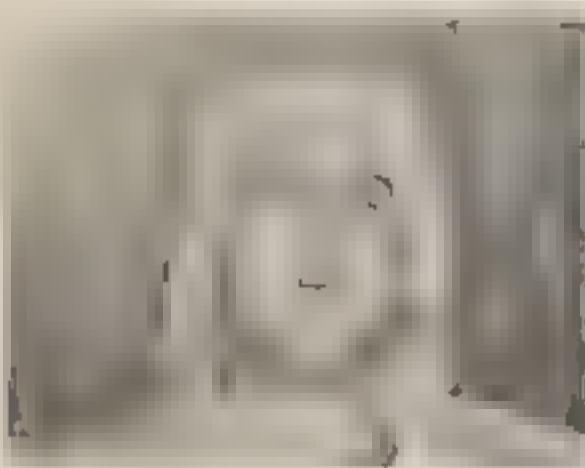
AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel had everything to lose and nothing to gain when he met Dewey Robertson in a title bout. In a previous non-title bout, Robertson had won a clear-cut victory. From the opening bell, both men fought like they had minutes to live. Finally, Robertson snared Bockwinkel in a figure-four grapevine—with only a minute before curfew—but Nick outlasted the bell for a draw. **OTHER BOUTS:** Jimmy Snuka used a foreign object to steal a victory from Ric Flair . . . The Destroyer triumphed over Klondike Bill . . . Jay Youngblood and Johnny Weaver edged by Brute Bernard and The Scorpion.

# WRESTLING CAPITALS



## ASHEVILLE, N.C.

By Andrew Ward



**RIC FLAIR**  
vs.  
**BARON VON RASCHKE**



A Texas death match sanctioned by the NWA, saw Ric Flair and Baron Von Raschke in its fiendish potentiality. Both men wrestled viciously and hard. The match seemed to last forever. Eventually Flair, bloodied and battered emerged victorious.

**OTHER BOUTS** Paul Jones topped Jay Youngblood. Rufus R. Jones won by disqualification over Dewey Robertson. Gene Anderson and Brute Bernard halted Tony Garea and Don Kermode. Abe Jacobs and Charlie Fulton drew.

## ALLENTOWN, PA.

By Michelle Ehrich



**BOB BACKLUND**  
vs.  
**HUSSEIN ARAB**



This was a really exciting match. Bob Backlund absorbed an awful lot of punishment from Hussein Arab. But he responded to every move with brilliant counter maneuvers. For a while it appeared Backlund might lose the title. Finally Backlund grabbed control of the bout and tossed Arab out of the ring where he was counted out.

**OTHER BOUTS**. Ted DiBiase crushed Jim Valiant. Swede Hanson bombed Johnny Rivera. In a few seconds, Tony Atlas defeated Moose Monroe.

## DAYTONA BEACH, FLA.

By Wesley Daniel



**HARLEY RACE**  
vs.  
**SWEET BROWN SUGAR**



Tonight, a man's dream came true. Sweet Brown Sugar has long sought a title match with NWA champion Harley Race and this evening he got his wish. Sugar's inexperience and impatience got him the belt. After a series of headbutts, dropkicks and flips, Sweet Brown Sugar threw Race over the top rope and was instantly disqualified.

**OTHER BOUTS**: Eddie Graham, Steve Keirn, and Ray Stevens belted Mr. Hito, Mr. Sakurada, and Killer Kahn. Jerry Brisco won by disqualification over Bugsy McGraw. Steve Travis and Jerry Roberts defeated Thor the Viking and the Masked Terror. □

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each day, out of the thousands of letters we receive, hundreds of them are from fans asking the whereabouts of their favorite wrestler. In this special column, we will try to answer the questions you ask the most!



## GREG VALENTINE

The sadistic master of the figure-four leglock is currently wreaking havoc in Japan, where knowledgeable fans find him as distasteful as American fans do. Rumors persist, however, that Valentine is returning to the Mid-Atlantic area and wants to team again with Ric Flair.

## TONY ATLAS

This massive hulking fan favorite has recently entered the WWF. Displeased with the way rulebreakers shatter limbs and regulations, Atlas is determined to rid the WWF of such men and carve a wide path to the top. Insiders whisper he craves a shot against Bob Backlund.



## DINO BRAVO

Bravo's signature was hardly dry on the contract bringing him into the AWA when various rulebreakers announced they would drive Bravo right back out. Similar threats have failed in the past and Bravo is resolved to challenge Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA crown.

## PAMPERO FIRPO

The wild man is destroying arenas, careers, and fans' faith in matches down in Puerto Rico. Please reach across both oceans in an effort to find a man able to control Firpo. As yet, no one can stop him.



# WHO'S ERNIE LADD MADE STAN HANSEN A RULEBREAKER AGAIN?

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE ADKINS

Ernie Ladd's evil knows no boundaries. He exploits any weakening in a scientific wrestler's resolve and tries to warp and twist the poor victim to his own demented philosophy. Stan Hansen recently fell to Ladd's poisons

**A**HARSH LAUGHTER filled the dressing room. Ernie Ladd sat on the training table, his gargantuan body looming over all. For a man who'd just been disqualified, he was in a very good mood

"So much for the *new* Stan Hansen!" Ernie roared. "I knew he was the same guy underneath. He turned fan favorite, strictly a scientific wrestler. Half I knew he was the kind of guy who'd murder his grandmother for a victory. I proved it!"

"They said he wouldn't use the Lariat anymore. Too dangerous. It wasn't a maneuver any scientific wrestler would use. Well, he used it tonight! How do Stan's fans explain that?"

"Did you see what he did to me tonight. Before I could ever get my jacket off, he attacked me from behind! Do 'scientific' wrestlers do that? Then, during the match, he used every dirty trick in the book. Finally, when he knew I had him beaten, he used the Lariat. Well, he didn't break my neck with it, though he tried hard enough. All

*(Continued on page 56)*

# HOUSEAT

## KEN PATERA:

**"I BEAT BACKLUND  
AND BRUNO  
BOTH ON ONE NIGHT!"**

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED  
BY STEVE FARHOOD

**C**ONTROVERSY STALKS HIM from area to area. No matter what he does his every word and deed is tinged with discord. He entered wrestling on the winds of promise. Everyone who saw him predicted superstardom as a scientific wrestler. Somewhere in the clouds he lost it. Changed course, direction and ended up propelled by black thunder clouds dispersing terror wherever he went. He won a title, the Mid-Atlantic championship. Now he has returned north to do battle with Bob Backlund. He is mean. He is talented. He is Ken Patera.

Q: Ken, welcome aboard  
A: Yeah, get on with it  
Q: Is something wrong?  
A: Just ask the damn questions

“  
Typical of the press and fans. Whenever it seems that Ken Patera has a legitimate gripe, everyone leaves the room. No one can stand to see me look good.”

Q: You seem upset  
A: I don't like four-eyed reporters, okay? You'll ask your questions, I'll give intelligent answers and you'll twist and rip my quotes apart to fit your own stupid thought. So ask the stupid questions  
Q: All right. First off, what

happened in the Mid-Atlantic area?

A: What do you mean?  
Q: I mean, you lost your title.  
A: So?  
Q: Doesn't that bother you?  
A: Why should it? Brunzell stole the title. I have proof that he paid off the ref.  
Q: What kind of proof?  
A: Proof, just proof. When I'm good and ready, I'll deliver the proof that Jim Brunzell is a liar and thief and he stole my belt. But only when I'm good and ready, d.g?  
Q: Why don't we go on to another topic?  
A: Oh, now you want to change the subject, huh? Typical of the press and fans. Whenever it seems that Ken Patera has a legitimate gripe, everyone





“

I've decided to give Sammartino and Backlund another chance. I'm gracious. I beat both Backlund and Bruno in one night and now I'm giving them a chance to get even.

”

leaves the room. No one can stand to see me look good

Q: Why did you leave the Mid-Atlantic area?

A: No competition. A bunch of bums like Brunzell, Steamboat, and Flair are not worthy of my attention. Only guy with any brains down there is Buddy Rogers and maybe Jimmy Snuka. Rest of them are stiff

Q: That the only reason

A: Course not. I'm a lot more complex than that

Q: Then why are you returning to the WWF?

A: I've decided to give Sammartino and Backlund another chance. I'm gracious. I beat both Backlund and Bruno in one night and now I'm giving them a chance to get even

Q: You beat Sammartino and Backlund in one evening? When did this happen?



Two of the strongest wrestlers who ever lived. Bruno Sammartino and Ken Patera battle in New York's Madison Square Garden. Above: Ken whips Bruno across the ring. Left: Patera stands over a badly injured Sammartino

Q: Hey, who's doing this interview?

A: This is important. So I don't have any pictures and can't remember the dates too well. If Sammartino were sitting here, would you call him a liar to his face? No. Would you call Howdy Doody a liar to his face? No. Only Ken Patera gets this rotten treatment. I'm fed up with your lousy double standard

Q: Calm down

A: Go to hell. I'm tired of this garbage and it better stop. Already the publicity is being leveled against me. Come and see Ken Patera get his rear kicked around the Garden by Backlund. I can't get a break no how

Q: If we can get a little more rational. Why did you ask the Grand Wizard to manage you?



66

I'm here for all the power I can accumulate. I enjoy wiping the floor with someone and running my fingers through his blood. Nothing exhilarates me quite like hearing my opponent screaming with pain.

”

A Because he's the only one with enough intelligence to understand me. I've had a lot of managers who couldn't begin to grasp my complex strategies. With the Wiz, I only have to think about my next move and he knows. It's great

Q Are you only after Backlund or do you have some sort of vendetta to carry out against others?

A (Grins) Like?

Q Well, informed sources say you want to end Sammartino's career

A Sammartino's career ended years ago. That hairy animal is living on past glory. It wouldn't take much for me to put him in a hospital. All I'd have to do is squeeze a little bit and he'd break

Q Then you do want to wrestle Sammartino?

Patera, a former Olympic weightlifter, has tremendously powerful thighs. Above: Ken drives his knee into WWF champion Bob Backlund's chest. Below: Patera gets a tremendous lift in kneeing Backlund in the chin.



A Depends on what kind of money they're talking about

Q Is that the only reason you're in wrestling, for the money?

A Definitely not. I'm here for all the power I can accumulate. I enjoy wiping the floor with someone and running my fingers through his blood. Nothing exhilarates me quite like hearing my opponent screaming in pain. What more could I want?

Q Do you have any real friends in wrestling?

A It's hard to have real friendships when everyone is jealous of me. I know that sooner or later, they'll stab me in the back

Q Ken, that wraps it up. Thanks for coming by

A You gonna print this the way I said it?

Q Every word.

A Make sure you do. □

PHOTOS BY GREG McDANIEL

**Jimmy Snuka now reveals  
that even while he was a scientific wrestler,  
he observed and studied  
the moves of former rulebreaker Ric Flair.  
Snuka has become U.S. champion  
and has given the credit to Flair.  
Ric wants no part of it**

## **Jimmy Snuka Admits...**

# **RIC FLAIR MADE ME U.S. CHAMPION!**



**H**IS PAST STALKS him like a blackmailing phone call. No matter how many times Ric Flair pays his debt, the negatives of yesterday's events still exist. Whether it is doubt about his motives or questions about his integrity, Flair cannot shake the past.

"I wonder if anyone will ever forgive me for what I've done," Flair says, shaking his head.

Compounding Flair's problems are those who use him as a role model. Not for good but for evil. That is what Jimmy Snuka does. Snuka says Flair has helped him. Snuka says Flair has made him U.S. champion.

An invitation to Snuka's private office is an unnerving experience. Voodoo dolls occupy an entire shelf on the rear wall. Angling to that is a white wall bank save for pictures of hellish torment in dazzling color. A small metal desk with a large, stuffed chair rests against the far wall. A spear with a red tip is off to the left side of the desk. A metal head with ghoulish silver eyes

and a hair-clip sits against Snuka's right elbow. A quick glance makes it difficult to distinguish between Snuka and the head.

His right hand flicks out and motions to a bridge chair. Snuka waits until the visitor is seated, then he leans forward, hands clenched, eyes narrowed in growing hostility.

"You want information?" Snuka asks, dispensing with an

Ric Flair comes full force with an elbowsmash to Jimmy Snuka's throat. The tactics Flair used as a rulebreaker have made Jimmy Snuka what he is today.



Jimmy Snuka says he is grateful to Ric Flair for showing him how to be an effective rulebreaker. Above: Flair smashes Snuka's tailbone across his knee. Right: Snuka elbows Flair to the throat to break a hold. Below right: Flair grabs Snuka's hair and elbows him to the back of the neck. Below: Ric takes the upperhand in a test of strength.



affirmative nod. He sips on some soda as his eyes drift, though they still brim with contempt. 'My inspiration is Ric Flair. Once, when Flair was a real man and not the idiot shell he is now, Flair was a great wrestler.'

'I'll never forget seeing him against Rick Steamboat. Ah, the way he made Steamboat cry and bleed. That was heaven. And the way he flopped people over and always kept opponents off guard. When you wrestled Ric Flair, you never knew what to expect,' Snuka paused, sipped and shifted his gaze directly on the inter-



viewer's face.

'Flair left a great legacy. If you wonder why I speak of him like he's gone, well, I've decided to tackle him and once I attack someone, well, they are goners. Finished.'

'So I focus on what Flair accomplished before he turned sour and before I ended his career. He was an inspiration to us all. I saw in him the true way to wrestle. He was mean, tough, rugged. He never quit. He never backed away from a fight.'

'And, like all great men, he surrounded himself with

*(Continued on page 54)*



WORLD WRESTLING

# OFFICIAL RANKINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Agents, Promoters, And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official.

World  
Wrestling  
Federation



Champion  
BOB BACKLUND



1 BOBBY  
DUNCAM

American  
Wrestling  
Association



Champion  
NICK BOCKWINKEL



1 BILLY  
ROBINSON

National  
Wrestling  
Alliance



Champion:  
HARLEY RACE



1 JIMMY SNUKA

Most Popular  
Wrestlers



1—ANDRE  
THE GIANT



2 DUSTY RHODES

Most Hated  
Wrestlers



1—KEN PATERA



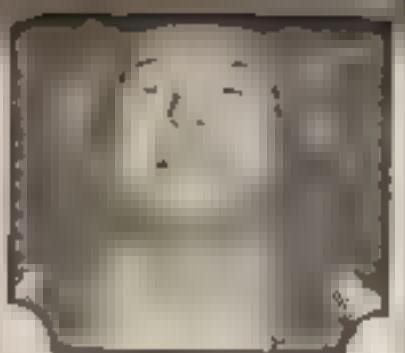
2 TERRY FUNK

Tag Teams



1—IVAN PUTSKI  
& TITO SANTANA





2 KEN PATERA



2 -GREG GAGNE



2 DUSTY RHODES



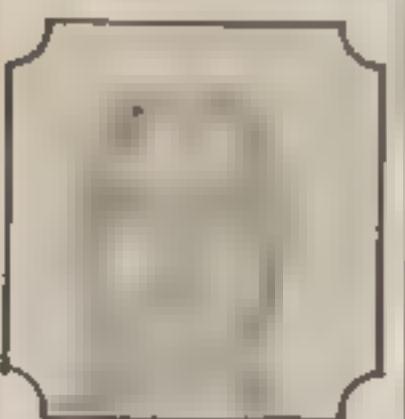
3 MR. WRESTLING I



3 PAT PATTERSON



2 VERNE GAGNE &  
MAD DOG VACHON



3 PAT PATTERSON



2 VERNE GAGNE



3 MR. WRESTLING



4 WAHOO  
McDANIEL



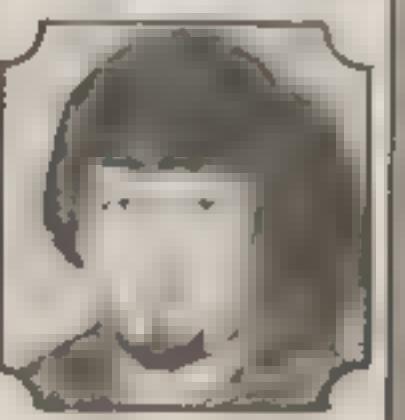
4 HARLEY RACE



3 RICK STEAMBOAT  
& JAY YOUNGBLOOD



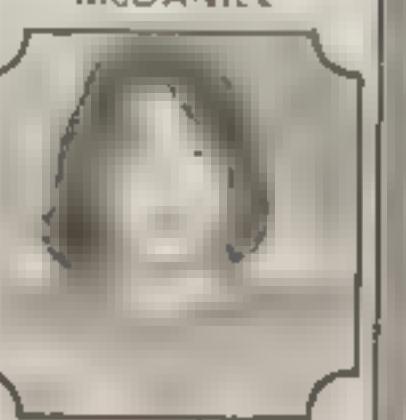
■ VAN PITSKI



4 JERRY LAWLER



4 - TOMMY RICH



5 RICK  
STEAMBOAT



5 NICK  
BOCKWINKEL



4 - TOMMY RICH &  
STAN HANSEN

5 TED DIBIASE  
6 CHIEF JAY  
STRONGBOW  
7 SWEDE HANSON  
8 TITO SANTANA  
9 HUSSEIN ARAB  
10 TONY ATLAS

■ SUPER  
DESTROYER II  
6 BILL DUNDEE  
7 MAD DOG  
VACHON  
8 JESSE VENTURA  
9 DINO BRAVO  
10 PAUL ELLER NG

5- MANNY  
FERNANDEZ  
6 WAHOO  
McDANIEL  
7 JIM  
BRUNZELL  
8 DICK  
MURDOCH  
9 RIC FLAIR  
10 KEVIN  
VON ERICH

6 JACK BRISCO  
7 MIL MASCARAS  
8 TOMMY RICH  
9 MIKE GRAHAM  
10 GREG GAGNE

6- SUPER  
DESTROYER II  
7- JIMMY SNUKA  
8- ERNIE LADD  
9- JERRY LAWLER  
10 EDDY  
MANSFIELD

4- TOMMY RICH &  
STAN HANSEN  
5- THE SAMOANS  
6- BRIAN ST. JOHN  
& NATURE BOY LANE  
7- VALIANT  
BROTHERS  
8- PAUL JONES &  
BARON VON  
RASCHKE  
9- SPOILER &  
MARK LEWIN  
10- DAVID & KEVIN  
VON ERICH

# The Funk Brothers Ask the Fans!



## HELP US BAN DUSTY RHODES!

**S**CATTERED PICTURES COVERED the dark blue sofa. Terry Funk seized a color photo in his meaty hand and shoved it at the visitor, his lips parting in an angry snarl.

"See this, here, look at it." Funk waved the picture in front of his chest, causing the photo to blur. Finally, he calmed his

trembling hand long enough to permit a perusal.

In the photo, Terry Funk was flat on his back, blood gushing from his forehead. His foe's legs were visible up to the knee, then the picture cut off the rest of his body.

"And this one, here." Funk grabbed another photo and

brandished it about his skull. This one showed Dory Funk Jr. struggling to his feet, crimson liquid pouring down his face, blinding him.

"All these pictures, all of them," Funk tossed a back-handed gesture at the 50 or so pictures on the sofa. "every

*(Continued on page 62)*

**Terry and Dory Funk Jr. have tried everything they could to eliminate Dusty Rhodes from wrestling. Or so it seemed. Now they are striking right at the heart of Dusty's career. They are asking the fans to ban the "American Dream"**

# INSIDE WRESTLING

43

CAPTION  
PHOTO BY

**M**ANY CONSIDER HIM two-faced and untrustworthy ("I go with the flow of things. I ain't got no patience for morons who talk through their armpits") . . . Presently holds the Missouri State title, a traditional springboard for NWA champion ("Yeah, I know the history. I can't do much about it unless that spineless wimp Race stops runnin' from me") . . . A tough brawler wherever and whom-ever he faces ("It's in my

DICK MURDOCH



Weary of the referee, Dick Murdoch moves his grip from Cyclone Negro's throat to his chin. Murdoch has gained a reputation as one of the sport's toughest brawlers. He'll not back down from anyone.

nature, toughin' things out. I don't step back from a fight and I ain't got any respect for a wimp who does, like Dory Funk Jr.") . . . Feud with

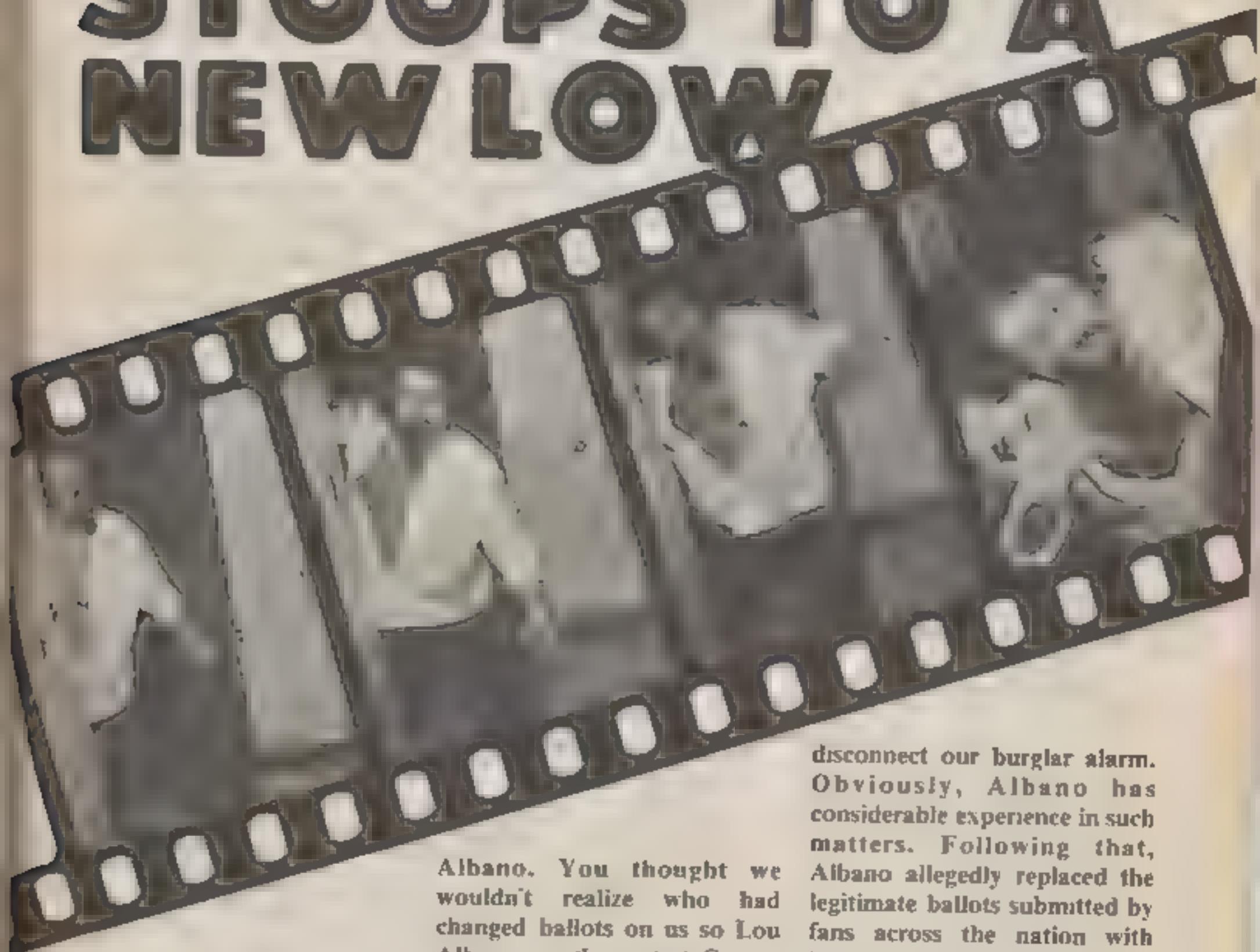
Dory Funk Jr. is reaching dangerous proportion ("I aim to settle matters with Funk once and for all. I hope his brother Terry tries to interfere 'cause I'll break his skull into a million pieces")

. . . Another recent rivalry is with Bruiser ("Bruiser is another big-mouth who ain't got the guts or talent to back himself up") . . . Fans either adore or loathe him ("I wrestle the same, no matter if people are shoutin' for me or against me. I can't be bothered with such stuff")

. . . Insiders contend that Murdoch is secretly jealous of former Outlaws' partner Dusty Rhodes ("Rhodes does his thing and I do mine. No reason for hostility"). □

When Murdoch wrestles rulebreakers like Baron Von Raschke, he usually receives the fans' support. Murdoch, who holds the Missouri State title, is currently feuding with Dory Funk Jr. and The Bruiser.

# DESPICABLE LOU ALBANO STOOPS TO A NEW LOW



THE GRIESEOME, EVIL  
face glared into the camera. His thick hand reached up and destroyed the lens. Apparently, Captain Lou Albano thought he had demolished the film as well. Little did he realize we knew who broke into our office and ruined the Bob Backlund-Ivan Putski Most Favorite Contest.

We got the goods on you,

Albano. You thought we wouldn't realize who had changed ballots on us so Lou Albano won the contest. Give us a little more credit than that.

Seemingly, Lou Albano heard of our contest. We didn't know he could read. Well, the Captain is chock full of surprises. He couldn't bear to see either Backlund or Putski receive publicity. Thus, he masterminded this fiendish escapade.

Lou Albano managed to

disconnect our burglar alarm. Obviously, Albano has considerable experience in such matters. Following that, Albano allegedly replaced the legitimate ballots submitted by fans across the nation with ballots showing Albano winning most popular as a write-in candidate.

Since the ballots were in our care, we accept full responsibility for their loss. For that reason, both Backlund and Putski are out of this month's Most Popular list. We apologize to both men and all the fans who entered this contest which was ruined forever by Lou Albano. □

# ONE ON ONE



*(Nothing is quite as tragic as a partnership dissolved in acidu hate. Precisely that venomous liquid covers Captain Lou Albano and Johnny Valiant. The breakup of Albano and the Valiant Brothers jolted wrestling. Vile recriminations from both camps flooded the world of wrestling. Despite efforts of friends to bring them together, Albano and the Valiants swore eternal mutual hatred. By the magic of video-phone, these two enemies are brought face-to-face, Albano from his retreat in upstate New York, Johnny Valiant in his plush California vacation home.)*



Picturephone photos courtesy of Bell Telephone.

**LOU ALBANO:** Well Valiant, you found your way to the phone

**JOHNNY VALIANT:** Think I

need a stupid slob like you to show me the way?

**LA:** Always needed me, Valiant. You and your brothers are

**Every month the telephone wires will crackle as two top grapplers rage and argue. We'll print the unedited transcript of their conversations, giving the fans a privileged glimpse at wrestlers which can be found nowhere else**

# WONE



nothing without me, understand? You were derelicts off the street when I found you and that's where you'll end up. We made you, creep, and don't you ever forget it, chump. The Valiants show class and the Valiants show skill, man. We don't need to stoop down to the gutter.

JV

LA: Why not? That's where you

live

JV: Who won the title, fats, huh. dig where I'm comin' from? Your fat butt didn't do nothin' for us, dig? Me and my brothers did all the work and you got all the glory. Later to that, man.

LA: You saying I didn't do any work? Why, you ungrateful leech, I spent hours planning

strategy you couldn't understand. Then I broke down each instruction to its simplest level and you cretins still couldn't understand my brilliance. I was the one who got attacked and

JV: You got attacked, man? You ran away at the first sign of trouble.

LA: When?

JV: Every time we were in trouble, man, you backed out the door, shaking that ugly head of yours and whining. Me and my brothers took the beatings.

LA: You took whipping 'cause you were too slow to get out of the way and too dumb to think your way out of trouble. Who'll think for you now?

JV: No one.

LA: Hah, say it again, fool. You'll be in the gutter without the

*Continued on page 64.*



# WWE PLAIN SPEAKING

**MEMPHIS, TENN.:** Spring comes early to the South. Skirts shorten. Long sleeves retreat to the elbows. And an old man remembers when. Enough of this sentimental stuff. Before long, I'll be babbling about Crazy Irma and those wonderful picnics near the Hudson River. Takes awhile for the old mind to thaw out. What lures me to Memphis is not Irma or bourbon (a little bit), but Superstar Graham. I'd heard rumors he was almost nice to fans and foes. Graham nice? We were never on good terms. I always thought him a loud-mouthed creep and he thought me a sarcastic simp. I tentatively phoned him. Incredibly, he was gracious. Graham has apparently mellowed. Not entirely. He's still as tough as they come, yet willing to see the other guy's point of view. Except when it comes to picking up the check.

**ORLANDO, FLA.:** His name is Sweet Brown Sugar. In my opinion, he's the most exciting wrestler to hit Flonda since, well, in a long time. His aerial maneuvers left me gasping. They nearly left Harley Race without the NWA belt. Sugar, or Sweets, as friends call him, came storming out. One-two, look out, a dropkick. Three four, a flying bodypress. Five six, three more kicks. Race is stunned. So is the crowd. However, impatience infects Sweets and he kicks aside the chance of a lifetime. In his eagerness to complete the victory, Sweets tosses Race over the top rope, an immediate disqualification under NWA rules. I hesitantly approached Sugar afterwards. I expected him to be distraught. I expected some chair throwing and some swearing and general loud petulance. I found none of that. Sugar has as much class



**SUPERSTAR GRAHAM**

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor



### PAUL JONES VS. RICK STEAMBOAT

outside the ring as he does inside. He freely admitted his deep disappointment at the outcome of the bout and credited his youthful eagerness with the unfortunate result. But the kid is determined and he's talented. If I were Race, I'd be looking over my shoulder at this flying contender

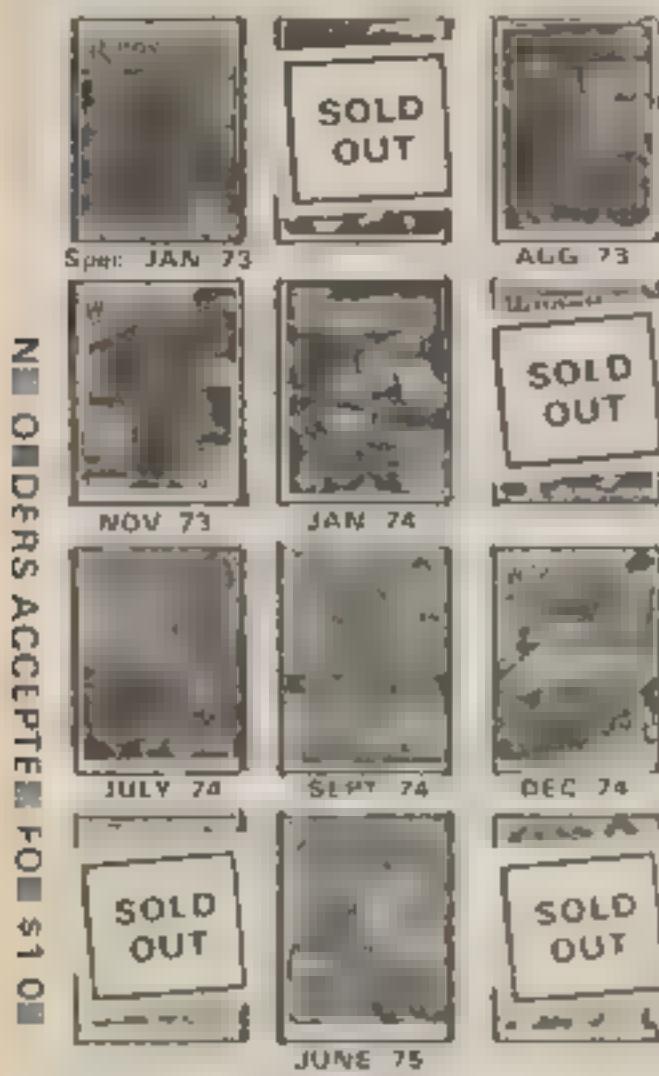
**CHARLESTON, S.C.:** What gives with Rick Steamboat? Always friendly and open, Steamboat has retreated into a somewhat surly shell in recent months. It started with his bizarre partnership with Ric Flair, a hated rival. People questioned Steamboat about that decision. Basically, Steamboat said it was his business. Fine. Then it's the public's business not to care about you, little Ricky. Wise up, Steamboat. Or better yet, grow up. Wrestlers must learn that they have an insatiable public to deal with. I'm not saying answering questions is simple. But

when fans have supported you in the manner of Steamboat's legions, you better come up with some hard responses. Steamboat refuses to open up. He was a nice kid. Once upon a time, anyway. Perhaps success is getting to him. If so, Steamboat may discover no one will listen to him once he condescends to talk to us

**NEW YORK, N.Y.:** Well, well, look who's back. A Brock favorite, hah-hah. Mr. Personality Mr. Ego. The one and only Ken Patera. The muscled clod is back and challenging Backlund. Patera should've stayed in the Mid-Atlantic area. Either Bruno or Backlund will bash Patera from one end to the other. All Patera has is a big mouth and blemished potential. Give Patera two months in the WWF and he'll be wandering in search of an area. And Patera better not trust the Grand Wizard. That shyster manager would sell Patera out for a bag of wheat. □

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## THE INSIDER

(Continued from Page 8)



### RUMOR VS. FACT

**RUMOR:** West Coast pretty boy Eddy Mansfield will be the first centerfold in a new monthly magazine which will feature naked wrestlers and their pets!

**FACT:** Mansfield is an egomaniac who claims to be the best-looking man on this planet. About a week's worth of old-fashioned investigative reporting (thanks to Gary Morgenstein for the help) revealed that this wild rumor originated from the desk of Mansfield's press secretary, Frankie "Front-Page" DiMacafay. There are no plans for the printing of such a publication. Although, in

Although Andre the Giant has a love for boxing, he says he will remain a wrestler. Above: Andre defeats New Jersey boxing champion Chuck Wepner in a wrestler vs. boxer match at Shea Stadium.

Los Angeles, anything is possible!

**RUMOR:** Motivated by the actions of former football star Ed "Too Tall" Jones, wrestling great Andre the Giant is considering a new career in pro boxing.

**FACT:** Several readers have written to me concerning this story. Fans of Andre, do not fret! While the Superstar is fascinated by the squared circle's "other sport," he does not plan to quit wrestling.

"I really think I'd make a very competent boxer," the Giant commented. "My reach is quite extraordinary, and I have a helluva right cross. I briefly chatted with some of the top boxing trainers, but I weighed boxing against wrestling, and the move became less appetizing. Maybe I'll settle for a 15-round slugfest with Ernie Ladd instead."



Killer Karl Kox severely burned Tommy Rich by pressing one of Bobby Heenan's lit cigars against his forehead.

## INJURY REPORT

In one of the sickest, most devlish stunts I have ever had the misfortune to witness, Georgia maniac Karl Kox borrowed the lit cigar of manager Bobby Heenan to attack Tommy Rich! Kox pressed the burning end of the cigar into Rich's forehead, and a horrible gash was opened. Luckily, Rich will not have to undergo cosmetic surgery. I wish someone would grab one of Heenan's lit cigars and shove it... Well, you know what I mean.

That's it for now. Catch you later.



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## Ivan Putski & Tito Santana

(Continued from Page 25)

control. "It's all up to the fans," Jay says. "It's how they treat the team. If Ivan gets much more applause than Tito, it'll eat the young guy up. I've seen it happen time and time again. But if the fans appreciate Tito's contribution, then everything will be fine. I know Ivan will do his best to put Tito in the spotlight. Putski really wants to

public, the private man is becoming harder to know. He leaves the arena almost immediately after the matches. Friends say he is fighting a war within himself. So far, the battle is at a standstill.

To the press, Ivan denies that there is any shred of jealousy. However, a friend, who prefers to remain anonymous, reports

"To tell you the truth, I'm not all that worried. Tito is a really exceptional guy. He's growing in the championship. Every match he gains more stature. Sure he's having some tough times. Why should he be the only guy in history to enjoy this situation? But he's got a real good head on his shoulders. I think he's going to pull himself



Santana goes high in the air to apply the flying head scissors (above left). Putski chuckles at Johnny's sudden peace offering (above right). The question remains, however, how long will Putski and Santana be at peace with themselves?

keep this title. Only time will tell."

T me can tell, but people are already beginning to make guesses. The guesses don't appear to be very important.

By the sheer force of his reputation and charisma, Ivan is more and more the focus of attention. Tito has never appeared less than happy in

"Ivan is worried. Look, the guy is human. When people make a fuss over him, he enjoys it. Who wouldn't? But he's constantly checking himself, trying to keep Tito in the spotlight with him. Tito is the partner Ivan has wanted all his life. He'll do anything to make this work. Unfortunately, there's nothing he can do about it."

out. With Ivan's help, these two guys should make it

"It'd be a crime and a pity if they split."

So far, the champions have been doing fine, at least in the ring. Still, their most dangerous opponent won't face them across the squared circle. What they have to fear most is what is within themselves. □

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## ON THE ROAD

*(Continued from Page 10.)*



With his left foot holding Black Jack Mulligan's left foot to the mat, Rick Steamboat stretches the Texan's body into an awkward position. Is there any truth to the theory that Rick is being blackmailed? His mood over the past month has indicated that something is wrong. Gary Morgenstein, a most lost his life investigating the possibility.

think someone's pulling your  
string and well." I paused  
Steamboat was glaring at me  
Behind his eyes, I saw pain  
And truth.

"Yeah." his voice was flat. Kind of punctured, as if he were relieved someone finally mentioned it. Still, wariness captured his face. Despite the twitch in his eyes and the painful stare, Steamboat wouldn't talk.

I had to ask him. Maybe I'd get lucky, I'm not sure. But I had to ask the question

"Are you being blackmailed, Rick?"

His mouth dropped. I could tell he would deny it. Yet I couldn't deny the pleading in his eyes. Someone had reached him good. He shook his head and looked away. I had my answer. Half of it, anyway. It was up to me to find out.

what that mysterious person or persons had on Steamboat and how I could extricate him.

This could be dangerous. For both of us.

Where to begin? Who would benefit from a unpopular Rick Steamboat? Would it be a rulebreaker exacting hideous vengeance? Or a struggling scientific wrestler jealous of Rick's immense popularity?

I sat in my Honda and pulled out the pad. Several names demanded attention. Jimmy Snuka? Ken Patera? Paul Jones? Ric Flair? Greg Valentine? Buddy Rogers? Jay Youngblood? Each of these seven men had reason to injure Steamboat

Jimmy Snuka despises Steamboat because manager Rogers hypnotized him into hatred. Steamboat is everything Snuka

never was or can ever be. Ken Patera has always baited Steamboat. Paul Jones still steams from his aborted partnership with Steamboat. Jones claims Steamboat got all the credit for none of the work. Supposedly, Flair has forgotten and forgiven the violent feud with Steamboat. Or had he? Doubts remain about Flair. Was he simply lulling Steamboat into false security and trust? How about Valentine? Why was he coming back to the Mid-Atlantic area? I didn't buy him being forced out by Sammartino Rogers? Doesn't Rogers look at young Steamboat and see himself



Steamboat knocks Jim Snuka off balance with a karate chop to the neck. Snuka is a prime suspect as Steamboat's blackmailer since being hypnotized into hating by Buddy Rogers.

15 years ago. Doesn't that infuriate him the way Ric Flair incenses him? Even Jay Youngblood Steamboat's record with partners isn't good. Has jealousy and strife invaded the quarters of the new Mid-Atlantic tag team champs?

Immersed in thought, I stumbled out of the car, pad in hand, pencil loose in left fist. At the last second, I dove away from the screeching Chevy headed straight toward me. Tumbling in the gravel of the parking lot, I caught only a brief glimpse of the stocky, dark-haired man behind the wheel.

I didn't recognize him, but I knew he was the blackmailer. □  
(To be continued next month.)



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## BODYSLAMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 12)

wrestling. After awhile, you learn to accept it. You never get to like it, but you accept it. Look, I don't care what people say, I'm coming back and I'll be better than ever. They've banned me, shackled me, gagged me, and I've still produced winners. They can do everything but stop me.

"And they won't stop Kox, either. He's one of the greatest wrestlers I've ever worked with, and I've worked with the best. That is, after they were with me they became the best. Kox is the same way. Right now, he's as good as any wrestler alive. I'm not exaggerating. Mark my words, Killer Kox will own the NWA before 1983. That's a Bobby Heenan promise!

"You know, people like Jack Brisco, Tommy Rich and Dusty Rhodes are always saying I'm finished. You'd think they'd get tired of predicting my doom, only to have me come back bigger than ever. I'm the man responsible for Ray Stevens and Nick Bockwinkel becoming the best tag team in history. I guided Nick Bockwinkel to the AWA championship. Yes, it was my genius that allowed him to defeat Verne Gagne. No one can tell me I'm finished."

I believe it. Heenan has one of the best minds in wrestling. Nothing can stop him from coming back better than ever.

As for Tommy Rich, he'll give the fans just what they want. Pardon me if I don't applaud. His incompetence, which he calls "scientific wrestling," will please those who like their wrestlers nice and stupid. Rich won't take risks, explore new ideas, or add anything to the knowledge of wrestling. Whereas Kox, under Heenan's guidance, brought wrestling to new heights, explored new directions, and made each match an adventure. For that, the fans booed him. They won't boo Tommy Rich.

The success of Tommy Rich shows how bleak the wrestling scene has become. A few years ago, the so-called rulebreakers dominated the sport. Superstar Billy Graham was champion, Lou Albano had a series of brilliant tag team grapplers, and Nick Bockwinkel was just beginning his title reign. Today, Graham struggles, Albano and the Valiants are feuding publicly, and Bockwinkel barely manages to retain his belt. From the best of times we've gone to the worst of times.

In those glory days, I would have laughed at anyone who said I'd someday have to take Tommy Rich seriously. Now, this column mourns his championship. We can only hope for better days.

Happily, with men like Bobby Heenan around, those days are right around the corner. □

## BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 14)



Pedro Morales dives at George Steele from the turnbuckles as referee Joe Louis looks on (above). Pedro is about to have a seat on Ivan Koloff's chest (below).



was one of the most successful champions in the history of the sport. He defended the belt at least 15 times a month under the most difficult of circumstances. Not only did Pedro have to battle the memory of Bruno Sammartino, but the absence of "The Living Legend" also attracted some of the sport's most vicious rulebreakers in quest of what they figured to be an easy championship. Pedro Morales proved them all wrong. "I thought that nothing could

be harder than working your way through the ranks for a title shot," Pedro said searching for his drink. "You take a lot of lumps working your way up. But once you win that title, forget it. First of all, everybody wants you to defend the belt in their arena. You can't say no if you're really a champion. Secondly, the dangers are extraordinary. Every thug in wrestling is gunning for you. Being champion was the best and worst thing that ever happened to me."

Pedro lost the title to Stan Stasiak in Philadelphia December 10, 1973. And since that time he has challenged for the WWF title only once, when Superstar Graham brought the belt to Florida. "I won the match, but I didn't win the title," Morales recalled. "And you know Stu, I'm glad I didn't. I had that urge to be champion again at the time, but I'm not sure I really had the desire needed to be a good champion."

One more pina' colada and a lot more of Pedro's inner feelings began to emerge. "It's coming back, man, I can feel it," he proclaimed. "This place is great. The weather. My family. The best pina' coladas anywhere, but I'm getting restless. I'm wrestling a lot, but there are no titles down here to shoot for."

Within a span of just a few minutes, Pedro's attitude seemed to change completely. I'm quite sure Pedro was talking and not the pina' coladas. I can only hope so. The look in his eyes clearly showed me that despite living here in his apparent Shangri-la, something important was missing from his life.

And I would not be at all surprised if he came back to the States and put up a serious challenge for one of the three major wrestling federation titles. In fact, I would be surprised if he didn't. □

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## Jimmy Snuka

(Continued from Page 35)



Flair works on Snuka's legs: Above: Ric applies his famous figure-four leglock. Left: Flair wraps Jimmy's legs around the ring post

is how Flair influenced me. He showed me how to wrestle and how to win. Yes, winning is all that counts.

'Flair was a winner, as I am. And I am indebted to him. Isn't it a shame that we can never be partners? Well, maybe he will change his mind in time,' Snuka said, shrugging. For a brief moment, regret crossed his face. It evaporated, as all decent emotions evaporate from this man's face, quickly and without impact.

As long as a demented mind slithers between the wrestling ropes, Ric Flair lives in danger. His past will be regurgitated into his present and discolor his future. No amount of apology or repentance can ever change what Ric Flair did.

All we can hope to do is alter tomorrow. □

genuine talent. He was friends with Greg Valentine, Ken Patera, and John Studd. Those are great men. All of them are great. They motivated me.

"I was still living blind, as I call it, that period before Buddy and Ken showed me the light. I used to hate Flair and his kind. I was afraid of them. I admit that now.

Like all scientific wrestlers, I had no courage. I was frightened of really messing around in the ring and going all out," Snuka said, his voice a crashing wave of hostility.

"Once Rogers taught me how to wrestle properly, I was on the right path. All that remained was my lighting the torch. That

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## BONNIE LADD

(Continued from Page 29)



he did was break his word!

"Stan Hansen is a rulebreaker from the top of his pointy head to the bottom of his flat feet. He might be able to fool you dummies but I always knew better. I used to be Hansen's tag team partner. I knew him better than he knew himself. It makes me sick to see him cheered by moron fans. Hansen belongs in my corner, not against me."

"When they told me he decided

Hansen promised the world he retired his dangerous lariat. Ladd is the first person he used the hold on in months (right). Hansen's headlock is clean (below).

Ernie Ladd provoked Stan Hansen into attacking him before the opening bell





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## ERNIE LADD

(Continued from Page 57)

when he was a rulebreaker, Ernie was already winning and the match hadn't even started!

By the time of the bout, Stan was crazed with hatred. Stan could barely contain his rage as he waited for Ladd to enter the ring. When Ernie stepped through the ropes, Hansen leaped at his foe. When the attack was over, Ladd smiled and shouted, "Is this how scientific wrestlers behave?"

Hansen was beyond control. When he stormed from his corner, Stan was more animal than human. He didn't bother with maneuvers one usually associates with wrestling. Stan used tactics he learned in the streets, in alleys, and anyplace else two people meet to destroy each other. Ladd handled him for the first few minutes, then Ernie bowed to the assault. Stan's assault put Ernie on the defensive. Ladd began to wonder if he'd gone too far. Hansen wanted to kill!

The match got uglier, more brutal. Fans were shocked into silence. Eventually, momentum took over the proceedings, forcing the action. Before it happened, everyone could sense that events would force Hansen to use the Lariat. Finally, Stan broke his word, betrayed himself and used the Lariat on Ernie Ladd.

It was the most heartbreaking moment in wrestling history.

The match didn't end there. The action continued for another few minutes. The conclusion came when the referee disqualified Ladd for choking. However, in the battle of wills, Ladd was the conclusive winner.

Hansen trembled with rage as he rushed back to the dressing room. Somehow, somehow, he would get revenge.

Tonight, however, Ernie Ladd was triumphant. Even if the rulebooks say he lost by disqualification. □

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## The Funks

(Continued from Page 38)

single one shows what Dusty Rhodes has done to the Funk family.

"Well, Mr. American Dream, we got the proof on you and your time is over and out, baby. We are gonna get your fat butt banned and we want the fans, our loyal fans who know all there is about wrestling, to help us out in this great mission of ours," Funk yelled, slumping into a chair.



Terry Funk agonizes in the dressing room while awaiting medical attention following a match with Dusty Rhodes. Terry and his brother, Dory Jr., are asking the fans to demand that Dusty be banned from wrestling.

For years, the Funk have been bitterly disdainful of wrestling fans. They have sneered at fans who offered advice. They have refused to listen to pleas to calm down and be more receptive to fan desires. In short, why should wrestling fans help the Funks?

"Cause we got a common enemy, that's why. Rhodes has attacked our family from one end to the other," said Dory. "He's gettin' away with it 'cause he's

blinded the fans. They don't see what kind of coward he really is.

"The Funks know his little game and the jig is up, as we say," Dory continued. "This is why Terry had to defend himself against Rhodes in Orlando."

Terry stiffened as his brother uttered those fateful words. After months of speculation, the real reason for Terry Funk's "attack and interference" was revealed.

"Yeah, I consider it self-defense," Terry said casually. "I had to defend myself against Rhodes. Look it, you can't let people push you around. A man gotta stand up for himself and not let someone like Rhodes spit in his face."

"That Dream has done more to disgrace wrestling, Texas, and the Funk family than I thought possible. His day is over, man. And only the fans can help us get rid of Rhodes once and for all."

"We want the fans to show they're behind us one hundred and eighty five percent," Funk shouted, rising off the sofa. "We want fans to write into the magazine telling who they prefer, us or the great bleached whale. Our loyal fans can either write in, come to the matches and yell at Rhodes, or call us up. Whatever way, we want the bleached whale banned."

"Right away, before he makes us all ashamed to be wrestlers."

As journalists, we constantly shirk from taking sides. Once we inject subjectivity into our stories, we lose all our credibility. How can fans believe us if they must wonder whose side we're on?

That's why we gave Terry and Dory space in this magazine. It's up to you, the fans, to decide who's right. And who stays in professional wrestling. □

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## ONE ON ONE

(Continued from Page 43)



Lou Albano claims that he dragged the Valiants out of the gutter and made them into the stars that they are today. John Valiant believes, however, that he and his brothers made Albano what he is today. Albano and Valiant check into a classy New York hotel while they were still together.

Captain 'cause the Captain took you to the top and the Captain will drop you down the chutes.

JV: We already got shots at Santana and Putski.

LA: Do not.

JV: Course we do. The Valiants don't need Albano. You should go manage some prelim guys, they need your help. That's about your level.

LA: You never thanked me. Not once.

JV: Why should we thank you?

LA: What you mean, why? For all I did for you.

JV: You did nothin'. You stole our money and...

LA: I never stole money.

JV: Did to. You skimmed profits off the top and left us with zilch, baby. Me and the brothers had to take extra jobs to handle the bills, baby. We trusted you and then you stab us in the gut.

LA: That's a ball-faced lie.



John Valiant admires his favorite person in the whole world—himself. Valiant charges that Lou Albano demanded such a high percentage of the Valiants' profits that they were forced to find outside work.

JV: Ain't no lie, man, it's fact, dig? We got proof of your doings and we aim to shove it under some commissioner's nose and demand satisfaction.

LA: You guys can't even read, let alone write.

JV: Another lie. Jimmy can so read.

LA: Hah, first grade books, that's all he can read. Who's gonna believe has-beens. No one would give you a match. You're finished, Valiant. Washed up in the business. You might as well look for other employment.

JV: Just stay away from us, Albano.

LA: Who's gonna make me?

JV: The Valiant Brothers.

LA: Hah, you couldn't make a cup of instant coffee. That's why I dumped you. Too much responsibility handling the affairs of the mentally lame.

JV: Just keep away, turkey. Or else you'll be planted in place. □

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